The
COMMONWEAL

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The ILO Meets

THERE is something undeniably impressive about the twenty-sixth annual meeting of the International Labor Organization which opened at Philadelphia April 20. Despite the war, forty of the world's leading nations are represented. Here is a genuinely international organization, which during the period between the two wars, when the League of Nations was finding increasing difficulty in weathering political storms, continued to grow in stature and usefulness.

By 1939 no fewer than 55 of the world's 60-odd governments were members of the ILO. The first to withdraw were Germany, Italy and Japan, and significantly enough Spain and Rumania followed. When Soviet Russia was expelled from the League in 1939, on account of its attack on Finland, it also ceased to play a part. But with these exceptions, four of the Central American countries, Iceland and Saudi Arabia, all the governments of the world are still ILO members. In the past quarter-century some sixty-seven conventions have been adopted at the annual conferences, while 887 ratifications of these agreements have been registered by 52 member states.

The function of the organization has been to draw up international agreements on such matters as hour, wage and safety standards, protection of women and young people in industry, paid vacations, the weekly day of rest, cushioning unemployment, social security, colonial labor standards, migratory workers and so forth. Such agreements in order to be adopted by the ILO must receive a two-thirds majority at an annual conference, to which each member sends one business and one labor delegate, two representing government and several technical advisers. Conventions are submitted to the members' national legislatures for ratification.

From its foundation in 1919 the International Labor Organization had headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. There it built up a permanent secretariat and what John G. Winant calls "the best library on social and labor problems in the world." It also issued an authoritative list of publications. Best known is the monthly *International Labor Review;* there are also two quarterlies: *Industrial Safety Survey* and *Legislative Series,* which translates and reprints the texts of important labor laws and regulations adopted by the various nations. More detailed studies on specific problems are published separately. Headquarters were moved to Montreal in 1940, where these publications and other activities are continued.

When we confront the magnitude and intricacy of the readjustments that must be made in by the postwar world, the availability of the ILO is one of the few hopeful factors. Here is a body of competent experts with a consistent record of constructive achievement in all quarters of the globe. Here, at hand, is a wealth of data and experience in meeting similar problems—if on a smaller scale—under the most varied conditions. Here is a group of public-spirited, trained men eager to tackle such problems as the demobilization and reintegration into productive civilian life of more than 100,000,000 men the world over—and to effect this by genuinely democratic processes of free discussion and uncompulsory national action.

This does not mean that all will be plain sailing. Certain absences from the opening of the conference point to grave conflicts. The AFL's apparent veto of CIO representation at the conference and Russia's continued silence about participation tend considerably to limit its effectiveness. And one of the greatest difficulties will be to decide how much power should be delegated to the ILO to deal directly with the international financial and economic policies which will have so much to do with the attaining of its objectives. Bertram Pickard of the Friends is even dubious whether the organization should assert unqualifiedly its right to scrutinize these financial and economic proposals or subject them to the test of informed international debate. For delicate questions are involved.

One thing is clear. The invaluable fact-finding, and recommendations to national governments

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which have marked the first quarter-century of the International Labor Organization must continue in its new postwar rôle. And its relationship to the other international institutions in allied fields to be set up after this war must be so defined that the ILO can exert the greatest possible influence. It is a genuinely international organization which has functioned effectively despite depression, revolution and war. The world can derive much from its experience and its example. It has worked unremittingly on these assumptions, expressed in its constitution: "Universal peace can be established only if it is based on social justice." And "the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labor is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve conditions in their own countries."

Doctors Disagree

THE VERY DAY the daily press carried an obscure paragraph to the effect that the United States House of Representatives had passed unanimously a resolution favoring the feeding of children in occupied Europe on the successful Greek plan, the New York papers played up in a minor way a doctor's assertion that conditions were not so bad. The Coordinating Committee of French Relief Societies, meeting at the Plaza, listened to Dr. Harold Stuart describe conditions in France. He estimated that half the children there were seriously undernourished and that French children generally were achieving less than two-thirds of their normal growth. But he then went on to say that they had adapted themselves to their meager diet by keeping still and that if the war doesn't last too long, the health of most of them will be restored. This flatly contradicts an imposing array of medical testimony. Further, it completely ignores the abiding social results of stunted growth, malnutrition and the bitter childhood struggle for mere survival. It forgets that Hitler came to power through a German generation warped by similar suffering. Such statements as Dr. Stuart's cannot be permitted to go unchallenged.

No Credit to New Jersey

THE PEOPLE of Great Meadows, N. J., have no reason to be proud of their recent victory over a Japanese army of five farmhands. Their triumph was complete; it was far from glorious. The five farmhands had been brought East by the War Relocation Authority at the request of Edward Kowalick to work as tenants on his farm. But the neighbors would have none of them. Finally they burned down a shed belonging to him and containing seven tons of fertilizer. Mr. Kowalick yielded and the Japanese were taken back by the WRA. Thereupon a delegation of the embattled farmers of Warren County waited upon Governor Edge in Trenton to protest the use of Japanese evacuees for farm labor in their communities. They frankly admit that what they really fear is the competition such Japanese might offer them. "They felt that the Japanese would, in time, undersell them and drive them out." Which seems like something of a damaging admission on the part of American farmers, who pride themselves on being the best in the world. But what is really the saddest part of the story is Governor Edge's comment on the whole proceedings: "I guess I don't blame you."

General MacArthur

THE ONLY comment which seems in order on the whole episode of General MacArthur's letters to Representative Miller is this: never in our history has a general in the field allowed himself to be put in the position of playing politics. Our Army and Navy tradition has insisted upon this lest our armed forces swallow up our freedoms. It has required General MacArthur to break this tradition. We hope he will find no imitators.

The OWI

FOR THE past week or two there has been a concerted effort to undermine American confidence in the Office of War Information. Scattered items have appeared in various newspapers; the New York *Daily News's* John O'Donnell, in his Washington column, has reported at length upon the sins of the OWI in Australia—among them, amusingly enough, the cabling to that English-speaking Commonwealth of the *French* text of an article by our own C. G. Paulding. Then the Scripps-Howard papers throughout the country ran a series of articles (daily for a week) by Charles T. Lucey. Under an elaborate front of impartiality, these articles in fact tend to build up prejudice against the OWI. Finally the New York *Sun* joined in the chorus with a series of its own by Phelps Adams, which is still running as these lines are written. Since hearings on next year's OWI appropriations are about to take place before the House Appropriations Committee, echoes of all this have cropped up in Congress, and we can expect to hear a great deal more on the subject during the weeks to come. Anti-Administration Congressmen are definitely on a gunning spree. Their thesis is that the OWI is acting as a propaganda machine for Mr. Roosevelt, and that when it is not doing this dastardly work, it is just plain wasting taxpayers' money.

In our own opinion, the OWI is subject to criticism. We do not believe that it has done a perfect job, or even come close to doing a perfect job. But we also do not believe that anyone could legitimately have expected it never to make mis-

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takes, and justice requires us to recognize that its worst mistakes are blamable not on the OWI itself but on those who determine its policies. Elmer Davis has repeatedly pointed out that his agency is not responsible for policy, but conforms itself to the directives which emanate from the State Department. It requires no inside information to say that following such directives is no easy job. If one is to quarrel with the general line taken by the OWI, one must quarrel with the State Department.

The technique of her Information Services seems to us far better calculated to make friends for England than is the technique imposed upon our equivalent. Material emanating from British government sources by no means exclusively reflects the point of view of the British Government. All sorts of diverse opinions come through official British channels, thus making available to Americans a fairly comprehensive view of divergencies within England. This is not the case with what emanates from the OWI. But for this, it must be repeated, the OWI is not to blame. What it might perhaps be blamed for is a considerable amount of "high pressure" in its operations. Its offices irresistibly remind you of the frantic scurrying around so thoroughly typical of our advertising agencies, radio stations, publicity agents. It seems to be an American notion that bustle and breathlessness are the principal ingredients necessary to influencing public opinion, and this faith has sprung forth from the American people itself, rather than from the spirit of our government. It is just as foolish when applied to finding ever-greater markets for a brand of coffee as when it is applied to "selling America" to the rest of the world.

Having said this much, we must, however, grant that the OWI has a great deal to its credit. It is a matter of record that its leaflets have been effective with the enemy as well as in occupied countries; its activities among neutrals have certainly produced results. In Turkey, Sweden, Switzerland, the people are more conscious of America than they were before the OWI got to work. In India's vernacular press, the OWI has succeeded in increasing the amount of space given to American affairs by approximately one thousand percent. Both in North Africa and in Sicily, enemy troops have surrendered as a direct result of "leaflet offensives." Said Italian Brigadier General Daurente in Sicily: "You hit us with thousands of leaflets. I forbade my men to read them, but they replied, 'What the leaflets say is the truth.'" There are even cases on record where Japanese soldiers have surrendered with OWI "safe conduct passes" in their hands. And Brendan Bracken, who, as boss of British propaganda, should be a good judge, has said that "the OWI operation in London is one of the most efficient I have seen."

It all boils down to this: the OWI has done as good a job as could reasonably have been expected. It has done it somewhat exuberantly though this was probably inevitable, given the American temperament and the circumstances. The present attack on it is inspired by partisan politics and nothing else. And in part this attack has been thoroughly disingenuous. It might perhaps be well to give a specimen. In the New York *Sun* for April 17, Mr. Phelps Adams discusses a volume prepared by the OWI and entitled "A Handbook of the United States of America." The purpose of compiling this handbook was to supply staff members of OWI with a ready source of reference material to answer questions which might arise in foreign countries relating to the America of today. A British commercial publisher (Hutchinson's) felt there would be a profitable market for this book if it could be offered to the British public. This was done. Says Mr. Adams: "Though the text has been reprinted and currently offered for sale in London, 'in the hope that it will be of value to the British public,' the OWI does not permit its sale or distribution in the United States. Congress, the OWI frankly admits, might object." Notice that Mr. Adams implies that the OWI itself is distributing the book in England, whereas in fact its public sale was undertaken for profit by a British commercial publisher.

On April 12, Representative Taber of New York had a previous article of Mr. Adams's, devoted to this same volume, reprinted in the *Congressional Record*. On the next day, Mr. Taber remarked in the House: "Nothing could come nearer proving the case against the OWI than that they clearly are ashamed of the book and did not want it to reach the American public where its faults and idiosyncracies could be developed. . . . Just so we may know that they were ashamed of having our people find out about it, let me read a little red slip that is pasted on to the book: 'Restricted: This publication is not for distribution in the United States or to American civilian or military personnel overseas.' They did not want the American people to know how they were fooling away our money."

The dishonesty of this line of argument becomes apparent when we examine one provision inserted into last year's "National War Agencies Appropriation Act for the Fiscal Year 1944." And it should be noted that Mr. Taber is a member of the committee which formulated this legislation. "No part of this or any other appropriations shall be expended by the OWI for the preparation, or publication of any pamphlet or other literature for distribution to the public within the United States." So apparently when a war agency does its best to follow out the mandates of Congress, it is rewarded by being taxed with cowardice and improper concealment.

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Oil, Gas and Money

Some answers to questions which haunt our minds.

Paul S. Stacey

In view of the present intense public concern over oil, we have asked Dr. Stacey to prepare this article. He is a member of the American Petroleum Institute and an investment counsel, specializing in oil properties. He was formerly a member of the Presidential Committee of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of America and a delegate to the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris. His oil experience began many years ago, with his ownership of wells in Poland.—THE EDITORS.

FOR AT LEAST twenty years there have been recurrent prophecies as to how long the world's oil resources would last. In recent months the war has produced an intensification of the discussion, and the average citizen must certainly be completely confused. He will find in his daily paper utterly contradictory figures: a domestic reserve which can last us only for thirteen years; a world oil reserve which we are assured will meet all our needs for a millenium. One thing is certain. The undeniable insufficiency of new oil discoveries in the United States has led us into a far more active policy with regard to the oil existing in other parts of the world, and the controversy over this policy is intimately connected with the disparity between various analyses of the reserves available.

Oil is a complex matter. Like all complex matters, writing about it involves careful statement. And careful statement does not always make easy reading. It is far simpler to be either over-optimistic or sensationally alarmist. I shall try in this article to give an over-all picture of the situation, dealing with it from three points of view—the financial, the "available reserve" and the technological.

In view of the present uncertainty about the future of oil, what can we say about this commodity as an investment? Would a private investor, charged with the responsibility of safeguarding his savings or inheritance, act wisely by investing in oil at a moment of changing world economy? It is axiomatic that any commodity with which society can dispense, or which can readily be replaced by some other commodity, is highly speculative as an investment. A guaranteed demand can only exist for really elementary goods. Thus sources of energy and of raw materials which are obviously basic to our economy become what might be called "categories" of our civilization. Such categories, whether spiritual or material, transcend all discussion of their necessity. Any future peacetime economy we can now envision would collapse were it to be deprived of oil. We cannot conceive a reducing demand for the products of oil. And hence oil must be viewed, regardless of the profits, as an excellent investment.

The record shows that the petroleum business has an ample economic history of profit. Joseph Pogue, a vice president of the Chase National Bank, has recently published an extensive study of the financial history of thirty leading American oil companies. He concludes: "The petroleum industry generates the capital needed for its expansion almost entirely from its own operations and is therefore a singularly self-contained economic unit. The combined net assets for the groups totaled over 6 billion dollars at the end of 1942 of which 700 million dollars or 12 percent were located outside the US. The rate of return on invested capital for the group averaged 6.4 percent for the period. The combined statements indicate that the oil economy is functioning soundly and effectively." Oil investments as traded in on the stock exchange, of course, consist in shares in companies active in all phases of the industry—production, refining, transportation and marketing. This fourfold source of profit means a strong investment foundation. It allows for internal balancing of risks and profits and is the basis of a relatively steady income.

In a period of managed economy, however, when the purchasing power of the currency varies widely, I am inclined to prefer investments more closely related to the fundamental level of production—in this case, the production of crude oil. Such companies as center their activities upon crude, together with the farming community—primary owner of the earth's oil resources—are the elements involved in this aspect of oil investment.

In the oil business the stake of the farmer in the mineral wealth underlying his fields is secured by divorcing his share in that wealth from the monetary system. His return, known as a royalty, is paid upon the ancient principle of the tithe. In

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other words, he is paid in goods, usually amounting to one-eighth of the oil produced, without taking into account any of the costs of production. Naturally in practice a royalty owner does not actually receive oil, but an equivalent in money based upon the current (monthly) price.

A purchaser of oil royalties performs a valuable economic function. The money he pays the farmer will not only be used to liquidate mortgages or other debt, but will be invested in machinery, fertilizers and other things calculated to increase the productivity of the land. And since it is exceptional for a farmer to sell more than a fraction of his royalty interests, the interest of the investor remains closely bound to the interest of the farmer and hence will always be a prime concern of the farmer's political representatives. This constitutes a particularly valuable guarantee in a period of structural changes in society.

Indeed the relationship between oil and money is today the reverse of what it once was. Not so long ago oil was a medium of speculation on which a safe, stable dollar might occasionally be gambled. Today money becomes more and more speculative and oil has become a symbol of real value.

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These financial considerations, however, are of minor importance compared to the question of what oil reserves we may rely upon. War always forces those engaged in it to enter upon a race of production and of improvement in all those goods upon whose quality and quantity military success depends. As a result scientific experiment and practical progress is vastly accelerated, and things which would have taken years to develop in a peace economy are brought to perfection within a few months. No longer is profit the criterion, but rather the very existence of the State; hence experimentation and production are pushed ahead without regard to cost.

This greatly stimulated activity leads to an immediate achievement of its goal in terms of increased production and improvement of essential goods and weapons as well as to radical changes in the peacetime economy consequent to the war. New products with important new characteristics become available, together with vastly improved and more economical methods for producing "established" merchandise. In no other field has this been truer than in the field of petroleum. Most of us are well aware that recent progress in fuels and lubricants has had a decided effect upon the outcome of the war. The much-publicized 100 octane gasoline (even more powerful fuels already have made their appearance) has made possible our great development in the air; manufacturing methods which have skyrocketed the actual production of such fuels are just as important to victory as are military triumphs.

Yet these achievements have tended, if anything, to increase the scarcity of oil in the United States. The logic of events, the known figures for domestic production, supply a powerful argument in favor of those officials who have recently been so much criticized for our oil program in the Middle East, intended to provide an additional reserve of one billion barrels outside our boundaries.

The United States, which covers about 5 percent of the land area of the globe, has to date supplied 60 percent of the whole world's crude oil production. More than half of this has actually been used up, and there remain, as proven reserves, about 20 billion barrels. The present daily production averages 4.4 million barrels, and will probably rise to 5 million barrels by the end of this year. Dividing the proven reserves by this production rate gives us the 13 years' remaining supply so often referred to in the press—based upon the assumption that no major sources of new oil will be discovered.

Actually, of course, new oil is constantly being found, but the yield of new discoveries is constantly less. According to E. DeGolyer, in 1937, 222 wildcat drillings added 2.1 billion barrels to our national supply; since then, there has been a constant decline in the yield of discoveries together with a constant increase in drilling activity. In 1942, 493 new wildcat drillings added only .3 billion barrels. In the light of these discouraging facts, the Petroleum Administrator has planned a 25 percent increase in drilling activities for the present year. The goal set is 24,000 new wells of which 5,000 are to be exploratory and 19,000 are to be used for the development of known fields.

The picture is a little brighter if we combine wildcat drillings in unproven areas with the results obtained from "extension" drillings and compare this with the actual output. The *Oil and Gas Journal* stated computed reserves (as of January, 1943) at 20,745 million barrels, to which 212 million barrels should be added from discoveries and 584 million barrels from "extension" drillings. The production figures for the year 1943 —1,495 million barrels—must therefore be deducted from the total yielded by the figures just cited (21,541 million barrels). This gives us an estimated remaining reserve as of January, 1944, amounting to 20,047 million barrels, a net decrease of only 3.3 percent.

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The optimum maintenance of our oil supplies depends upon a number of administrative measures. These in part directly affect our wells, by increasing the economy and efficiency of their pro-

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duction, and in part operate indirectly by supplementing our reserves through imports and by accumulating stocks of oil in foreign countries. Direct regulation at home is mainly aimed at eliminating the misuse of oil by means of scientific methods involving limited production—the system generally known as "proration." Furthermore, regulation at home adds to our oil output by requiring secondary recovery methods and, finally, by controlling drilling operations. The latter are likewise stimulated through WPB priorities and a highly favorable tax setup.

Proration is the first step in rationalized production. Most of our oil pools are no longer drawn from to maximum capacity. In order to preserve underground energy, the pressure which drives the oil to the surface, the output of every well is limited to an amount determined by the most careful scientific method. This amount is based upon the oil-gas ratio—the quantity of natural gas which may be extracted with each barrel of oil.

Secondary recovery methods are designed to salvage oil supplies which can no longer be obtained from producing wells by means of artificial flowing or pumping. They consist in the introduction of liquids or gases which increase natural gas pressure and raise the "dead oil" to a higher level.

The tax setup covering the drilling of oil wells is of vital importance and constitutes an example of incentive taxation which should receive more attention from proponents of that system. As everyone is aware, a failure in drilling operations must result in the total loss of the capital invested therein. Therefore the tax law greatly favors the driller, even when he is successful. It allows very large deductions from current income, regardless of the source from which that income may be derived. Approximately 65 percent of drilling costs of a successful well may be deducted in the form of intangibles (expenses for fuel, labor, travel, etc.). Up to 35 percent remains tangible property, and of this amount, 20 percent annually may be credited to taxes for depreciation. In addition, the law permits the deduction of 27½ percent of all gross sales as a charge to depletion. All of this is nothing more than a deliberate bait for venture capital.

Yet at the present moment even these very favorable tax provisions have not succeeded in bringing that army of 18,000 small-time independent drillers, who are in the long run indispensable, into action. Among the various reasons for their inactivity, the price of oil plays a major rôle. These small-time drillers, unlike the big companies, have no compelling interest in saving taxes through the investment of profits derived from other sources in drilling ventures. They are accustomed to risking their money, but they are attracted only if they can be assured of a handsome profit in case of success. Now if oil commands a price which is disproportionately low in comparison with that of other commodities—especially in view of higher costs of tools, rigging, labor, etc.—such a venture has little allure. The facts speak for themselves. The present index number for all commodities stands at 104: that for farm products, at 124; for metals, at 104. The equivalent figure for petroleum is 62.

No one seriously contests the statement that if we are to find new oil fields, the daring gambler is more needed than ever before. Flouting all scientific methods of exploration, no less an authority than Wallace E. Pratt, Vice President of Standard Oil of New Jersey, has repeatedly said, "Oil must be sought first of all in our minds." The reason for this is that to date all the explanatory methods developed by science merely reveal the geological conditions necessary for the presence of oil, but not the presence of oil itself. The definition of certain substructural strata, their probable porosity and permeability, supply valuable clues to their capacity to act as reservoirs of oil. Should the rock which encompasses absorbent strata prove to be impermeable, it may form the eagerly sought trap for oil deposits accumulated through the course of millions of years in the porous strata. But unhappily experience has proved that many of the richest oil deposits lie in areas in which submerged sands did not yield significant results to scientific exploration because they did not reveal any conspicuous strata. An old submerged shoreline need not, for instance disclose itself to scientific probing. And furthermore it may or it may not contain the remains of organic life piled up millions of years ago and converted into oil. It is here that the "flair" of the wildcatter counts for so much; if, thanks to this flair, he strikes oil, he enriches not only himself but his country as well.

Thus the return of the small-time driller is highly desirable. Yet we must admit that all the success they might achieve would not supply our needs were the soil of the United States really as devoid of undiscovered oil as some experts claim and as the statistics on new findings seem to indicate. On this matter, however, there is divergence of opinion. Wallace Pratt, in his lecture "Oil in the Earth," tells us that there is still plenty of oil within our boundaries, awaiting its discoverers. But Pratt goes further and makes a fundamental modification in the estimate of oil reserves. He insists that we must add to these the supplies of natural gas which are already proven—supplies which in heating capacity exceed our known oil reserves. By so doing Pratt doubles our reserve—calculating it at nearly 40 billion barrels.

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From the global point of view, not more than 15 percent of the world's proven oil areas are to be found in the US. The US occupies first place in order of precedence, according to Max W. Ball in his book, "This Fascinating Oil Business," because it has yielded 61.3 percent of total world production, whereas Russia, in second place, has yielded only 10.2 percent; Venezuela, in third place, only 9.5 percent. In the much discussed Middle East, Iran with 3.9 percent occupies fourth place and Iraq with 1.6 percent, eighth place. All this contrasts strikingly with the fact that the proven and indicated oil reserves of the Middle East are estimated by E. DeGolyer as being 26 billion barrels — considerably greater than those of the US. On the North American Continent we have Mexico in seventh place with 1.8 percent and Canada in sixteenth place with .4 percent.

The Canadian picture may well change radically in the very near future. Although Canada contains 5 petroleum areas, of which the Turner Valley in Alberta has so far been the most important, she until a short time ago imported as much as 75 percent of her oil. The miraculous "sand tars" along the Athabaska River in northern Alberta are a new element. In a very interesting discussion of these deposits by Max W. Ball (1941), their minimum content is estimated (on the authority of C. P. Bowie of the US Bureau of Mines) at 250 billion barrels. In this case the oil is not pore-space filling, but rather envelopes each individual grain of sand like a film. The mining of these sands has already been started with the cooperation of the Canadian government. Despite certain technical difficulties, considerable results may be expected in the near future.

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But meeting American demands by means of importation from abroad is now an emergency measure. Whether the US will become permanently an oil importing country we cannot say. If new discoveries cannot keep pace with ever-increasing consumption, may not a more efficient utilization of crude oil, together with the use of substitute or supplementary materials, help to solve the problem? How a more economical use of oil can be achieved is best seen through a brief account of the various refining processes used up to the present. Crude oil is a mixture of chemical compounds of hydro-carbons. The heavier compounds are dissolved in the lighter. There are various series of such compounds, the paraffin series being the most important because it includes all petroleum gases. This series contains gases, liquids and solids. Among the gases, methane, the volume of which is the largest, comes first on the scale because of its lightness. Next below it comes butane, somewhat heavier. Next below butane are various liquids which constitute gasoline, octane being fourth on the scale.

As long as the only purpose at hand was to develop for immediate use the best and most suitable products out of these hydro-carbon mixtures, the "straight-run" distillery was adequate. By means of heating and cooling off, the oil is here separated into its constituent parts without disturbing the structure of their molecules. In such a process the basic composition of the crude oil to be used is all-important, for nothing other or better than its constituents can be extracted.

The great advance represented by catalytic cracking and by polymerization arose from the fact that these procedures made possible partial transformations in the molecules. In practice this meant principally that the methane, which up until then could be used only as an inexpensive heating fuel, could be transformed into highly valuable gasoline.

But the ideal utilization of oil can only be achieved when it is looked upon merely as a raw material in an altogether new chemical industry. This latest industrial development is not satisfied with accepting the hydro-carbon compounds supplied us by nature. It adds lacking carbon and hydrogen in order to control the end-products at will. Hydrogenation is the latest development in this field. The Fischer-Tropsch process, which has made it possible for Germany to conduct her military operations without a sufficient reserve of crude oil, has supplied the basic principle for amazing developments in the US. They offer us undreamed possibilities of utilizing to the utmost oil as a raw material. By an ever-increasing application of and improvement in this technique, we can supply the market with varying final products to meet changing demands. The sober fact is that by using this procedure, we can now derive much more than a barrel of high grade gasoline from a single barrel of crude oil, and of course there will be many byproducts left over.

Over and above this technological advance, the problem of adequate reserves is further lightened by certain other circumstances. The raw materials needed for "oil" in the US do not consist in crude oil alone, but could be developed from other usable hydro-carbon compounds. I say *usable;* I mean any substances from which we can obtain final products of equal quality at the same cost as is involved in obtaining them from crude. For the time being this eliminates two basic materials, coal and shale. At present England is forced to produce part of her gasoline from coal, but can do so only with heavy government subsidy. Our Colorado shale is usable only in case the market price of crude should considerably increase. (See Arthur W. Baum's recent *Saturday Evening Post* article "What Can We Use for Oil"). Even then, the production of gasoline out of shale

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would be difficult. In order to produce 23 gallons of gasoline, 1½ tons of good grade shale must be handled. Much experimental work by the Bureau of Mines in its Pittsburgh pilot plant will still be necessary before we can make use of these two raw materials commercially. By sponsoring a bill which provides $30,000,000 for research work on substitute fuels, Senator O'Mahoney has given evidence of great foresight; no doubt such appropriation would sooner or later fully pay for itself.

But in addition to coal and shale there is available a third substitute which is usable on the basis of techniques already developed and which is thoroughly practical from a commercial point of view. This is the natural gas which Mr. Pratt insists should be included in our calculations of oil reserves. The war has brought about changes in the utilization of natural gas which are clearly no more than the beginning of a vast development. As early as 1937 it was obvious that by means of a transformation of molecules, most of the products derived from crude oil could likewise be derived from natural gas, although at greater expense. Today the expense of manufacturing several such mass products from natural gas is strictly competitive with the expense of extracting them from crude. In 1942 a commercially feasible way was found to produce gasoline by means of water and gas. It involves applying a method derived from the Fischer process. W. S. Farish has calculated the cost of producing gasoline out of natural gas as being 6 cents per gallon.

A recent report of the State Department of Vocational Education at Stillwater, Oklahoma, gives some idea of the variety and importance of the products which can be and are being derived from natural gas through oxidation, cracking and chlorinization. This report amply demonstrates how wide is the variety of fields in which natural gas can play an important part, among them, plastics, solvents, anesthetics and cosmetics. Ethylene glycol, nearly indispensable in anti-freeze compounds, is now exclusively derived from natural gas. The annual pre-war production of wood alcohol could be fully covered by a single gas well having a daily output of 10,000 MCF. A well with one-tenth of this gas output could satisfy the entire national demand for carbon tetrachloride, the most important of all dry cleaning fluids and fire extinguishers. An editorial in the *Oil and Gas Journal* for January 27, 1944, tells us that "much of this development is shrouded in wartime secrecy." Yet, as said above, professional circles are well aware that the most important problem of the moment, that of economically converting methane into gasoline, has been solved commercially. Already this fact has had its effect upon the selling policies of some of the natural gas producers, who are refusing to enter into long-term contracts. With our present techniques we can make 6 gallons of gasoline out of 1,000 cubic feet of natural gas. One of the leading natural gas companies bases its calculations on a selling price of 4½ cents per gallon of gasoline and estimates the expense of converting methane into gasoline at 2½ cents per gallon. Thus the company would make approximately 12 cents for every thousand cubic feet of natural gas. Compare this with the present price of gas sold for fuel purposes, 3 to 5 cents.

Surely these new uses for natural gas will not long remain theoretical. In consideration of the present crude oil situation in the US, it seems highly undesirable to burn up 97 percent of the annual output of a highly valuable oil substitute for heating purposes. And on account of the enormous gas reserves remaining to us, it will be possible to effect a shift-over in the use of this precious resource very gradually, thus effecting a minimum of inconvenience on those who now rely for heat upon natural gas. Supreme Court Justice Jackson, in a report of January 3, 1944, declared that "careful study of the entire problem may lead to the conclusion that use of natural gas should be restricted by function rather than by areas . . . industrial uses to which it appears particularly adapted, and use as a raw material in the chemical industry." This statement should come to be our guiding principle in national policy.

From a global point of view, a truly well-planned and thoroughly efficient utilization of oil and gas is in its infancy, and will grow rapidly. With such utilization, our reserves seem practically inexhaustible. What we must remember is that it will no longer be oil and gas as such which afford us a solution of our problem, but rather the chemical industry which looks upon them as constituting the world's reservoir of hydro-carbon compounds to be transformed with the minimum of technological waste into the final products the world needs.

No One Mocked

Let us at least keep silence when some boy
Goes forth to slay Goliath, since we find
No giant in our ranks we can employ
Against the foe so skilfully aligned.
Israel's army, white with prayer, was still
When David stood out ruddy in the sun
Against black hosts on the opposing hill;
Nobody mocked him, not a single one,
But the bronze champion, stricken on that day
With lightning in a pebble and a psalm.
Let us be quick to cover our dismay
From true-believing eyes, alert and calm.

Weight not our warrior to the very dust
With the great helmet of our old mistrust.

ROSALIE BOYLE.

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The Two-Edged Sword

Christian adventure

Jean C. de Menasce

OUR GOD is an audacious God, He is a loving but not a cautious God. Man is here as a result of this love, this audacity; and certainly to be in man's state is not to be in a comfortable state; those who live in the marches are due to suffer many blows; every quarrel ends by being fought out on their lands. Thus Christianity has made our human state even more difficult to maintain. It is more difficult to be Christian than simply to be human; the Christian can rise higher and fall lower. Christian corruption can go further than any merely human corruption (cf. History *passim*) : *corruptio optimi pessima*. The Gospel gives us some idea of Christ's calm recklessness when He tells us that the state of the man whose house has been cleaned and adorned may become worse than before.

The respect for human life in Christian life forbids us to consider man as cannon fodder or as an instrument for production, but, also, it protects us from being spoiled children with too generous a granny; man must not be wrapped up in cotton batting; life and human happiness may be risked in heroic and magnanimous undertakings. Confucius said that a man who loved his parents, lest he worry them, did not stroll at the edge of a precipice nor climb mountain peaks. We, Christians, know that the Father smiles upon the audacious. Yet this Christian balance is easily lost, and then, following the bent of our temperaments, we slip into an implacable disdain for life, for the gentle and the good things in life—or else we shelter and protect humanity, until it cannot breathe. Christ is both mother hen and eagle. That's too hard for us to understand. So we become both soft and harsh, and this is why we have our civilization of clinics, morphine and aspirin, and also our civilization of iron and of blood. The Chinese have less tenderness and less audacity.

★

Most ancient civilizations look toward the past. They have thought always that humanity's and society's Golden Age had been—continued to be—there at the beginning, and that, ever since, humanity had lost ground. A return to the past, a faithfulness to the past, a yearning for a certain primitivism, a certain conservative attitude springing from a more or less conscious theology (and let us not forget that anonymous influences are the strongest) assured society's stability. What Maurras would call "the Christian virus" changed this attitude, completely. Christianity places mankind's Golden Age in the future. The earthly Paradise can have no great appeal for those who have heard that audacious "Felix Culpa" in the liturgy. No doubt one will find among many orthodox or heterodox Christians (especially among the heterodox: Rousseau and his "good" savage, the Protestants haunted by a primitive Christianity) a more or less persistent effort to look once more toward the past. But all the immense surge of Christianity draws in the opposite direction. Our entire civilization has become a tremendous pilgrimage toward the future; a static or retrograde equilibrium has been broken; we find balance by marching forward. An airplane remains aloft only through its motion. To stop is to crash.

When the Christian spirit loses its grip, our advance, our normal effort, our audacious effort—yet calm because it is strong and self-assured—becomes spasmodic and violent; that sure progression in the broad daylight of Providence turns into something like a shout of defiance in the night. The pilgrim becomes the revolutionary. And after the tortured and spasmodic efforts we are witnessing, our civilization, if it manages to escape from its Christian memories, will reef its sails; we will put on our slippers again and sit at home; or, regimented, in barracks.

★

"Be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect;" *Memento homo quia pulvis es et in pulvere reverteris,* "I thank you, O Lord, for having made of me so admirable a creation": "What is this quintessence of dust?" "Christ became man to make man God." That is how we learned to take in our stride misery and weakness, but also—what immeasurable grandeur! In spite of the terrible weight of matter a splendid optimism inspires our humanity. Perfection is not just a dream, a utopia or a desire; perfection is the ripening of vital forces placed in us, perfection is not a blueprint; imperfection is an abortion. An irresistible unrest breathes in our hearts and in our civilizations; the daydreamer who thinks he is an artist

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discovers that his dream is too great to be expressed in marble; the marble is too hard, the clay, too soft and gluey—but the artist knows how to transform the roughest stone into something as smooth and gentle as a woman's breast. The Christian is not disturbed either by the softness or the harshness in things; he is not perturbed by the laws within things; he knows that he can impose upon political or economic life the laws of love. When a Christian errs in his social and economic theories, it is usually through a certain voluntarism: possibly Saint Thomas and the scholastics paid too little attention to material casuality. But it is not easy to keep an entirely lucid awareness of human misery and grandeur when the two extremes have become more and more disassociated. In our times man thinks that he is caught again in the eddies of cosmic, historical or merely economic forces; an appalling moral defeatism compels us into all sorts of conservative positions. Those in whom the perfectionist "virus" has remained—but only as an attitude—are furious, maddened and scandalized at human weaknesses and timidities; the more the revolutionists are idealist, the more they become sanguinary; man loses patience with man's inertia—and he who loses patience is lost. The ideal of perfection in love and unity also has deteriorated; there remain but the two positions: those who want the barracks and those who want the Taylorized factory. Arrogance and despair have taken the place of humility and generosity; weakness and brutality, the place of patience and strength. Man has come to believe that he must become a cactus plant which dares not change its desert and survives only by making its leaves thick and hard—or else a Michelangelo-Fuehrer, assaulting and tyrannizing the inert marble. No, I desire to be neither the resigned cactus nor the tyrant.

★

In Greek and Roman civilization there was only room for the esthete, the intellectual, the soldier. The shadow of slavery darkened all the dignity and grandeur of manual labor. Christianity brought us a whole theology of labor, a "mystique" of labor. Man's work is not just punishment and humiliation; human activity collaborates with the creative activity of God. Man's work extends God's creative activity and shares in its nobility. Peasants, artisans and artists humanize the things they touch, make them better than they were. It was no philosopher, no king, no poet, no general who became the leader of mankind—it was a carpenter. It took a long time for such a transformation of values to permeate humanity's conscience. A long time indeed. In historical Christianity it is easy to say that the serfs and the peasants are somewhere, unhappy in the wings, the stage proper crowded with the figures of knights and kings. That of course is so, but then the Eucharist itself, was it not left for centuries in a corner of our churches before we placed it at the center? And so it seems to me that our entire mechanical and materialist civilization could not have come into existence had not Christianity cleared the ground. Our civilization is a Christian heresy. The Christian conception of work has a mediatory and messianic function; it establishes communion between men and nature and between men themselves. I do not see how the messianic conception of the proletariat could have been formulated in a Greco-Roman slave civilization, or in an Asiatic or African civilization.

★

When the gods were scattered about and inseparable from the earth, when there was a god perched in every tree, on every stone and in every cloud, any investigation of nature could seem only impious and sacrilegious curiosity. Who dared poke his nose into the mysteries of the gods? Judeo-Christianity raked the earth of all these broken fragments of gods. The earth no longer was haunted. And little by little in our Christian feeling "Mother Earth" became *sorella aqua, fratello sole*. Immense and terrifying nature became a creature on a possible scale and was placed at our disposal—a little sister with whom we were allowed to play and whose hair we could pull. I believe that this cleansing of the earth through transcendentalism was inescapably necessary in order to open the gates for the scientific investigation of the laws of nature and the nature of things. For the pagan, the world was either a sort of divine masquerade, or an illusion, or the arbitrary product of the absurd; in any case what was the use of investigating it? Who in his right senses would waste his time playing hide-and-seek with Venus, or would risk smashing his face against an inscrutable wall?

And once more, of course, it took a long time to exorcise this terror that was in nature; it took a long time to understand that man only is great. Even such a Christian as Pascal could write "the infinite spaces terrify me." Yet little by little we learned to see the world as it is, calm, tranquil, sometimes a little turbulent, but a good fellow all the same—and then our intelligence went off galloping like a fine horse and there was the wild ride of science through the macrocosms and the microcosms.

But when the Christian spirit weakened, science, which seeks to understand and know, became arrogant and domineering; the engineer replaced the pure scientist. After that first terror it was tenderness that came, and now there has come brutal domination and exploitation. Earth, no longer divine, no longer sacred, lies trampled under our feet, disemboweled, monopolized, worn out,

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raped. And this Christian corruption makes one almost regret the pagan piety. The cleansing that was brought about by transcendentalism has become a cleansing by the void. With God swept off into a corner, we stamp on the world. But nature's grandeur revenges itself on the children who play at being Prometheus. We shrink back miserably into our subjective science; the unknowable and the electric draw close upon us, besiege us, stifle and dissolve us. And the poor little neurotics who survive grasp avidly at all that they can piece together again of abandoned cosmologies and astrologies.

★

The ingredients for any social life necessarily must be a certain feeling for social solidarity, a certain personal vigor, a framework for the family, respect for law. Here as everywhere else the influence of Christianity has been at work, breaking down, consolidating, giving these elements a dangerous depth, breadth and height; the various components have developed according to different rhythms and now they no longer fit together.

In all its dogma and morality, Christianity develops and consolidates the feeling for human community. Christianity is social not only in its practical application but in the very heart of its dogma. But if through the dogmas of the fatherhood of God, the descent of mankind from Adam, our embodiment in Christ, Christian Morality (which is a faultless web of charity) binds together the life of the group, these dogmas, and all the moral consequences issuing from them, broaden the group and extend it. Christian politics should be the politics of integration and of articulation; but the politics of the Christian peoples has remained a politics of expansion and adventure. In the closed group there has been a policy of expansion; in the open group, a policy of exclusion. We have not understood this manner of contradiction, and so the societies in our world are stricken with a terrible nostalgia for international collectivism. Modern imperialisms are not only vast enterprises in plain robbery, they are also sacrilegious parodies of a dream of unity in that they substitute for that unity a standardized conformism.

In the heart of even the smaller collectivities Christianity has left a perilous nostalgia for both intimacy and grandeur which leaves us unsatisfied with all the practical and political—superficial—adjustments we attempt. Nazism, the myth of the white man's burden, the several "vocations" of the nations are not simply the rationalizing of vested interests; they are ideologies with which we attempt at all costs to fill up the void left in our hearts by the memory of the Mystical Body. Here again we have sacrilegious limitations—childish and brutal—of the Mystical Body. It is not just the secret police, the machinery for propaganda and oppression, which make modern totalitarian states worse than pagan totalitarian states, it is this new temptation of the fuehrers to take Christ's place, to lay hands on this marvelous and hidden world of the inner life, a world of which the pagan Caesars were unaware.

★

In family and social life, authority, for the Christian, is never a matter of simple expediency, or of fact, or a position which lawfully is granted the best, the strongest or the most intelligent. Neither age, nor wealth, nor cleverness, nor force gives anyone the right to command. Every Christian knows—or should know—Leo XIII's simple and calm affirmation: "There is not a man who has either within himself or of himself that which he would need in order to bind in conscience the free will of his fellow men." Yes, man is so great that no man can speak to him as a master. To obey a man—in so far as it is the man who is obeyed—is to make oneself vile and degraded. God above commands us, and human authority is but a delegation from God, and this delegation is not a blanket delegation. In the Christian view authority is at one and the same time divinely strengthened and most rigidly limited. He who wields power is not a superior but a servant; authority is not a reward or a privilege but a service and a function.

I do not suggest that this complex conception has ever completely spread in our consciousness and penetrated our sensitiveness, our attitudes and our psychological and moral reactions when we stand before those who lead us. But Christian truths are tenacious. When the Christian balance between opposite truths was disturbed, when the Christian tension grew slack, our humanity started to oscillate between equally dangerous extremes. With Luther there was abject capitulation to authority; with certain forms of sectarian Christianity, capitulation to anarchy.

It would not be difficult to trace a similar influence in regard to the Christian attitude toward law. No longer is law simply custom, manners, the inheritance of the past; in the contingent and the transitory, law expresses the eternal will of God. Human laws can no longer exact obedience through any servile spirit of conformism. Christianity, facing Caesar's law, opens up to man the sanctuary, the unattackable sanctuary, of man's conscience. But at the same time Christianity becomes responsible for a certain spirit of unlawfulness. Civil and political laws draw their strength from both the natural and the divine law, and thus propose a moral problem which in the last analysis must be solved by the conscience of man: "If this law is unjust I can break it. I must break it."

A second article, concluding the above, will appear in an early issue.—THE EDITORS.

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Communications

"TVA : DEMOCRACY ON THE MARCH."

Chappaqua, N. Y.

TO the Editors: When you write, in your review of Lilienthal's book, that "the cooperation of the valley farmers in rebuilding the soil has led them to revitalize their communities," you touch upon the very essence of TVA's significance for America and the world.

The most striking consequence of the recent, and as yet undefeated, efforts of Senator McKellar to weaken TVA, was the unanimous rallying of the people of the Valley to the defense of TVA. This is not a very common phenomenon in our political life and can only be explained by the fact that the people consider TVA as something which they themselves have created, day by day, over the past 10 years.

To anyone in the least familiar with TVA, it is not the scope of TVA's operations that matters most. Although that scope is quite impressive. The gigantic dams and power houses. The yearly sale of 12 billion kwh to public and private agencies, from the Aluminum Corporation of America to Sweetwater, Tennessee. The huge factories working day and night. The delicate and infinitely complex malaric controls. The continuous and coordinated research into the economic structure of the region. The river terminals and the map program.

It is not even the achievements of the past 10 years, although they are very great. Fertility has been returned to the soil. The hills of Sevier County, Tennessee and the rolling lands of Lauderdale County, Alabama, are green to-day. The waters have been checked and have been turned to profitable use. More electricity is available at lower rates than ever before. New crops and new machines have been introduced. The people of the Valley are full of confidence in the future.

The real lesson of TVA is one in democratic method. A few days ago, as I was going through the Valley, a newspaper representative asked me: "Isn't this what Mussolini did in Italy?" My astonishment was so great that the answer was limited to a brief "Of course not." Of course TVA has not been doing what Mussolini did in Italy. Not in a material sense. The hills of Tennessee are green with grass and the number of cattle has increased as a result of TVA's agricultural policies. The hills of Sicily and the plains of Puglie are to-day more brown and barren than ever and the number of cattle has been badly reduced as a result of fascist policies.

But even more than in *what* has been accomplished, we are interested in the question of *how* it has been accomplished. What fascism did, was done by command from above. Decisions were reached by the totalitarian state, people were shifted around like animals, tools of a plan about which they knew nothing. They were the passive instruments of state policy.

TVA has gone to the people, armed only with the Act of Congress which established its existence. Not for a moment did TVA assume that its plans could in the end be carried out successfully, unless they became part and parcel of the thinking of the people of the region in which TVA operated. The enlistment of all government agencies down to the smallest and poorest municipality, the feeling of primary responsibility on the part of the farmer and of everyone concerned which TVA has evoked, are at the very core of the unique success of TVA.

This is the lesson in democratic thinking and action which we and the rest of the world have to learn from TVA.

MARIO EINAUDI.

TEACHING THE WORKERS

Baldwinsville, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I understand that some who read "Teaching the Workers" (The Commonweal, April 7) thought that by the phrase "we paid in failure" I meant that the "ACTU and Catholic labor work generally in this country" have been failures. I want to state most emphatically that I meant no such thing. So much pure gold has come out of these movements already that even if they were all to fold up tomorrow, which thank God they show no sign whatsoever of doing, it would still be most unjust and inaccurate to use the word "failure" to describe their careers.

What I should have written is, "We paid in failures," because I meant that by our reluctance to use the spiritual weapons of our Faith more vigorously and unashamedly we had failed in particular enterprises that we undertook, we had failed to reach certain objectives that we might otherwise have reached.

Another fault of my article was the absence of a proper tribute to the men and women, priests and laymen, who have labored in this field—many of them so much harder and longer and more effectively than I—and whose labors I appeared to criticize. These people are not only the very best people in the world, bar none, but most of them are (or at least were) my very dear friends. So if I was moved to a critical discussion of their (and my) methods in times past, it was only because (1) I am naturally fortified with the most colossal impudence, (2) I regard their labors as so terribly important that I want to see them as effective as possible, (3) I have had the peculiar opportunity of being alternately active in the movement and then forced to the sidelines for longish intervals, during which I had lots of time to look back, ponder and write scurrilous articles, and (4) it seemed to me that THE COMMONWEAL was a good forum for discussion of ways and means in a cause which all of us agree is just about as vital to America and the Church as any cause you could name offhand.

JOHN C. CORT.

The Stage & Screen

Follow the Girls

TO BEGIN with, this is an *amplified* show. In other words, as far as I am concerned, automatically a lemon. I don't know how most people feel about this especially callithumpian attack—wherein you get a sort of

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vast, rackety broadcast curtain of sound built mainly by an orchestra whose brass is always brain-breaking, and through which you can somehow perceive the players mouthing and jigging away—but I hate it and can see no point. Of give-and-take between audience and actors there is none; the thing is compulsive. Moreover, it is, I think, unnecessary. There was no one on the stage of the Century the other evening not experienced (even expert) enough to project without the wiring. If this sort of thing continues, we shall have singers with the voice of the turtle, funnymen with the roar of a mouse, plus a great secret Kafkian system of knobs and buttons and speakers and tubes designed to rear aptitude into talent for the innocents of the world (you and me). For movies, radio, television: of course; these are the mechanized arts. But the theater is *Players for People*—immediately, generously, mutually—and that's the way I like it. Beyond this, a disappearing book by Guy Bolton and Eddie Davis deals with the Queen of a Service Canteen and provides the skeleton for music and lyrics by Shapiro, Pascal and Charig; some intermittent ballet and ensemble woefully schemed by Catherine Littlefield; and a number of skits manned chiefly by Jackie Gleason, who is everybody's Bouncing Boy but mine. The show cannot make up its mind between burthe other evening not experienced (even expert) enough to unpretension) and it seems profligate to find Irina Baranova engaged in a number of solos to no music at all—or at best a rehash of Sousa. Star of the evening, Gertrude Niesen, gives like sixty-six and I rather imagine one of her songs, "I Want to Get Married," will hit the airwaves in a sterilized version. The usual discrepancy between the work of the director and designer (this column's favorite carp) is here succeeded by a complete lack of *rapport* among the designers themselves. Howard Bay's settings and Lou Eisele's costumes not only do not jibe, they clash; and I did not like either one. In conclusion, it is sadly necessary to report that one of the largest, strongest, most determined, pushing, fighting audiences I have ever experienced like it out-loud in the lobby between the acts. (*At the Century.*)

"—But Not Goodbye"

THIS is an interesting business. In a perceptible curve, it starts out as a character comedy, gradually ascends into fantasy, and crashes into farce at the final curtain, with the audience in on the secret from beginning to end. I have never imagined so many enormous technical problems so airily tried. The story (author, George Seaton of "The Song of Bernadette" among other screen plays) is not an especially original one, and involves an ordinary New England family in the year 1910, the head of which (a sterling and humorous man) dies just at the moment when a secret and risky financial deal promises ruin to the hopes of his wife and children. He becomes a visible ghost, is in turn joined by his ghostly father—equally visible—and together they combine to force his erstwhile financial partner to return the funds which have been suddenly successfully realized to the bereaved and poverty-stricken family. From the moment that the transformation from man to apparition is effected, the stage is naturally

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peopled by two sets of speaking characters, one of which is ignorant of the other's presence; and from then one, most of the action hinges on a piece of paper—a check—which is lost, found again, and in the meantime left lying in the face of the audience while agonizingly missed by the right members of the cast. The *dénouement* is accomplished by a gigantic sound effect, a sight effect, and a loud laugh. If it sounds like a fiasco, I can assure you it is one, at times a charming one; and I most certainly wish the author had been able to choose between the three *kinds* of play he has mistakenly blended. His piece is soundly mounted and staged by Richard Whorf; and a number of intrepid and skillful actors—among them Harry Carey, Elizabeth Patterson, Wendell Corey and J. Pat O'Malley—are kept running all about trying to keep pace with his presto changes. While at the same time, an anxious house attempts simultaneous reactions of an opposing nature. Certainly Mr. Seaton's faults are on the side of profusion, which should mean that he can learn from them rather than letting them box him completely. I hope he will try again after reading (possibly) Yeats's examination of comedy and farce in the "Autobiography," Chesterton's dissertation on the grotesque in the "Browning," all of Shaw, all of William Archer, and, of course, this column from now on. (*At the Forty-Eighth Street.*)

The Searching Wind

A HELLMAN-SHUMLIN opening is always an occasion and it's nice that this one makes use of the newly-decorated Fulton Theater, one of the most charming if (this season) unluckiest of the smaller houses. Embellished with hydrangeas here and there, the place had an air of expectancy and bustle last Thursday which lasted, however, not quite through to the end of the evening; for Miss Hellman has this time, astonishingly enough, kept her audience in what is known as "the dark" for most of the proceedings; and there, unfortunately, they remained even after the final curtain. Her play is, of course, a modern one since, at once the most astute and enlightened of our practicing dramatists, she is the least reluctant to admit to being alive and thoughtful in a parlous time. Here she examines the fortunes of three adult people—one man, two women—who are emotionally involved with each other, and ideologically concerned with the present war and the historical events leading to it. Setting her characters in the diplomatic world—the male protagonist ends as French Ex-Ambassador—she employs a flash-back technique between present-day Washington and the Rome of 1922 (Mussolini's march on the city contrived by King and government); the Berlin of '23 (first of the organized Hitlerian anti-Jewish riots); finally, the Paris of '38 (the day of Chamberlain's and Daladier's trip to Munich). But tracing the reactions of a trained American diplomat, two educated American women, plus that of a further American—a defeated liberal—plus those of a number of plain Italians, Germans and Frenchmen, to these incidents is only one half the play; the remaining half is devoted to an *affaire à trois* between the man, his subsequent wife and her oldest friend, and it is here that obscurity settles down to pall the works. Employing the dangerous device of surprise, the author deliberately allows the relationship between the two women to atomize increasingly during the period involved—deliberately equivocates their separate dramatic identities as heroine and villainess—and then quite suddenly, at the last gasp, allows one to admit to the basest motives for reasons which are small, startling, unclear and unproved. Some solution to the sad, guilty, confused policy of appeasement under scrutiny in the one half of the piece is supplied in conclusions drawn by the couple's young soldier son in a moving final scene.

But beyond this, Miss Hellman has been unwilling to relate the uneasy scattered morality displayed by her adult characters either to their thinking or their actions; she has been unwilling even to define it. As a result, she was forced, I think, to particularize a universal theme; somehow or other to melo-dramatize it, reduce it to the proportions of a single character whose motivation is unwritten, whose reality is always in question.

Played, I am sure, exactly as written, the piece naturally includes one un-actable part—that of the "other woman" taken by Barbara O'Neil; but even aside from this, I am not sure that Mr. Shumlin's direction has been of the greatest assistance. To begin with, I am uncertain of the worth of casting Miss O'Neil and Cornelia Otis Skinner in the leading feminine rôles. Only possible actresses both, these two are rather more alike than various, their quality, pace, even physical attributes being matched. In her *grand* scene, admittedly an impossible one, Miss O'Neil gave every evidence of the most careful coaching but with little reserve of feeling to support it. Erring on the side of emptiness, I feel it would have been far better for her to have been exactly as bad as the scene, rather than nothing at all.

Then too, with so many incidents presented by only two characters, Mr. Shumlin has chosen a naturalistic method of staging, with the actors facing each other across a table, or standing in the midst of the set. This means, of course, that only one actor is wholly seen by either side of the house; and all through, I had the sensation that if only I could see both Miss Skinner's and Miss O'Neil's *faces,* rather than one or other of their respective backs, I could perhaps tell what they meant by their lines, what was in store. On the other hand, although certainly easier jobs, the male members of the cast are uniformly excellent. Dudley Digges's crotchety liberal, Dennis King's diplomat are severally precise, commanding and, in the case of Mr. King, especially attractive. In the part of the young soldier, Montgomery Clift delivers another fine interpretation.

He is still the victim of a Lunt twang—speaking the language as though he had learned it somewhere in Scandinavia—and he seems also to suffer from some slight hesitation of speech, but this latter difficulty somehow manages to intensify his reading. The part proves that he is as useful silent as speaking, perhaps the surest test for a young actor. I hope he will cure the accent business during this run. Playing a German bigwig, Arnold Korff contributes one beautiful and instructive bit; and working this time under a sure director, Howard Bay's sets are more than satisfactory. (*At the Fulton.*) KAPPO PHELAN.

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Your Way Is My Way

THERE'S quite a nice treat coming up soon for them what likes a good sentimental movie. In fact audiences who shed a gentle tear at "The Human Comedy" are likely to drop two splashy ones at *"Going My Way"* and should have a lovely time.

In its way, this Paramount movie represents something new in the line of feature films. Not only is there an absence of romance among the principal characters, but the leading rôle, that of a priest, is played by an actor long associated with musicals. Furthermore, while this picture has a fine production and is unusually long (actually, its 130 minutes are too long), it gives the impression of being an unassuming little movie. This is due mainly to its simple story and warm affectionate humor, its excellent direction and two outstanding performances.

Leo McCarey, who produced and directed, also wrote the original story from which Frank Butler and Frank Cavett wrote their screenplay. It tells an engaging, rambling tale about two priests; the younger one, playful, modern and versed in psychology, is sent to relieve the elder who is prayerful, old fashioned and has been at St. Dominic's in New York City for 46 years. The conflict concerns the methods of the younger priest and the resentment of the elder who built the church, saw the parish grow and doesn't realize the need for a young curate's butting in and "putting the parish in shape." Both the priests are good, sincere men of Irish decent. There are episodes of delightful humor like the incident of the stolen turkey and the sequence on the golf course. And there are episodes of moving poignancy like the one in which the sensitive old priest, hurt and indignant, runs away after hearing that the bishop sent the young man *to be pastor.*

Also involved in this episode story are a a famous opera star (Rise Stevens treats us to the Habañera scene at the Metropolitan); the banker (Gene Lockhart) who wistfully holds the mortgage on the church; his son (James Brown) who takes more than a passing interest in the girl (Jean Heather) about whose welfare the two priests have cause for alarm; a garrulous biddy whose gossip would be the bane of any parish; another young priest whose friendship proves of great assistance; and an assortment of tough youngsters who wind up in the choir after our hero priest gets them in line. But the main winner of huzzahs for "Going My Way" is the splendid acting of Barry Fitzgerald and Bing Crosby. The former plays the wise, sly old priest with just the right touch; he's cute at times, but never objectionably so; he has worked hard and he's proud of the fine church he has built; he's set in his ways and would be difficult to live with; but he is lovable and you feel for him keenly when he thinks he is being put out by an upstart.

Crosby, as Father "Chuck" O'Malley, is a delight. His charm and understanding of the rôle are apparent in every scene. One can appreciate how a young rather carefree priest like this, who is wearing an athletic sweat shirt when he first presents himself to the pastor and

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whose strains of a mundane song disturb the elder man at his prayers, would be very trying to the good father who believes there's a place for everything and the place for "Three Blind Mice" is not in the church. Of course Bing also sings songs of a religious nature, and sings them extremely well. His work with the choir is a pleasure to behold; many a young priest could get a few good pointers from his technique. The song which gives the film its title is too insipid for my tastes, even as sung by Stevens and Crosby. Its saccharine rainbows and bluebirds could hardly be considered ideal Catholic sentiments. Supposedly written by Father O'Malley, this song is not even in keeping with his characterization.

While this film is steeped in practical Catholicism, it has much that will appeal to all audiences. However, many Catholics and non-Catholics are likely to gag at some of the sentimentality. The romance between the landlord's son and the straying girl is a bit thick and overdone; and after a series of sentimental ups and downs throughout the whole film, the finale (in which the old priest's ancient and shaking mother is brought to America from Ireland as a surprise for him) is almost nauseating. However one can forgive Producer McCarey for his overdose of sweetness because the good parts of "Going My Way" are so extremely good. The pleasant story and character studies of the two priests, who differed in methods but not in fundamentals or at heart, make top-notch entertainment.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Editors' Choice

OUT OF THE MIDWEST. *Edited by John T. Frederick. Whittlesey.* $3.50.

ENDURE NO LONGER. *Martha Albrand. Little.* $2.50.

Where Men Are

WHAT ARE the principal ingredients that go into the making of America's Middle West? There come to mind the plains, the prairies, the northern lakes and woods, the rivers, the cities and the numberless small towns, where for a few hundred yards a wide street and an uneven skyline of nondescript low buildings parallel the railroad track. There are the interminable flat and fertile fields of Kansas which it takes the fastest passenger trains a whole waking day to traverse, the Iowa "black velvet" where corn and hogs do best, the forests and mines of northern Michigan and Minnesota, the mills and foundries of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, grain elevators, corn cribs and refineries, trains and trucks and ships. Everything from the trim cutaway on Michigan Boulevard to the familiar blue jeans which provide a universal symbol of life on the soil and workaday community neighborliness. For the most part a flat country, a friendly country, a vastly productive and often progressively pioneering country with accents, tones, colors, feeling all its own. Since Americans from other counties would do well to appreciate the geographical heart of our nation, John T. Frederick has undertaken a worthy task in making available in one place glimpses of the Middle West from the writings of her own sons. And "Out of the Midwest" has a genuine feel about it.

Elma Klinedorf's "Goofy" is a successful impressionistic study of men working in the big steel mills, and through their reactions to an impassioned labor agitator, of what makes them tick. Michael De Capite's "The Bridge" is an even warmer picture. His characters are Italian Americans, his heroine an all-sacrificing mother who does her utmost to see to it that her children succeed in this new land. Appealing vignettes of a contrasting nature are Wallace Stegner's "North Dakota Ballgame" and Paul Corey's "Neighborhood Morning." There are two selections which are rattling good short stories as well as good slices of midwest life: "A Little Action" by Harold Titus recounts the day of a train despatcher; "Arkansas," by Raymond Weeks, is a tenderly fantastic tale of a long-awaited hog race. These are but a few of the delightful regional touches which Professor Frederick has brought together.

The editor of this volume, and Frank Luther Mott, who provides the concluding excerpt, point to a much higher function for regional literature. They refer to those novels, poems, biographies and other writings in which the author has used local materials—the stuff of life which he knows directly and knows best—to express ideas, feelings and situations which are universal. There are not many in this Frederick collection which attain to this standard if it is applied in any rigorous sense. In fact, rereading Willa Cather's "Neighbor Rosicky" about halfway through the book produces sort of a shock, it is so much richer than what immediately surrounds it. Yet there are other brilliant moments. It would be difficult, for instance, to find in brief compass a more striking personal impression of the bleakness and meaninglessness of the modern American city than Ben Hecht's "Night Diary," which starts things off. William Allen White's editorial tribute to his daughter, Mary, killed in an accident just before high school graduation, strikes a poignant note. And Richard Sullivan's "The Women" is remarkably successful in conveying strong attraction to the weaker sex.

Any reader can find in these four hundred pages a poem, a sketch, a story or a biographical note that will appeal to him as much if not more than the selections mentioned in this review. Each section of the country has its history, its tradition, its glories, but Professor Frederick's volume makes it hard to believe that there is any section of the United States more colorful, varied or articulate than our often maligned Middle West.

Understanding

MARTHA ALBRAND, her publishers tell us, "comes from a family in which for centuries one son became a minister and one an officer. Thus she was raised between two worlds: the Prussian spirit on one side and the doctrines of humanity on the other." This is fully reflected in the tone of her most recent novel, "Endure No Longer." It is not a great novel. But it reads easily and it has some moving characterization. What is most important of all, it translates the German militarist into human terms—terms which we may not like, but which we readily can understand. Her officer father and his officer friends are not monsters, but people produced in a pathetically narrow and bigoted surroundings, an atmosphere so provincial and limited that it is only with difficulty that we can see how so ill-ventilated a class could really succeed in threatening the peace of the world. By having done this much, Miss Albrand renders Americans a real service.

Her story is that of a girl born not many years before the last war to a Prussian father who had married the

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daughter of a wealthy merchant—the sort of marriage purchased by a young woman's ambitious parents at the price of subsidizing her future husband's impoverished relatives. To some extent the first war breaks down the barriers. The daughter of such a match in normal times would never even have met a Jew or a Catholic. War produced both phenomena. But the downfall of the Hohenzollerns, coupled with the fresh air pumped in by the Weimar Republic, led to even more devastating changes. The girl had to go to a public school, and there she met a social democrat. The influence of her merchant grandfather—liberalizing because circumstances forced men of his class to be less rigid in their views than were the professional soldiers—was thus reinforced by external events to the point where our heroine breaks loose from her environment and runs away to Berlin, where she succeeds in carving out a career for herself and where she falls in love with and marries the Jewish aviator-hero whom she had first met during the war. Both of them saw the gradual increase of nationalism and the gradual acceptance of the nazis by the German people, but her husband felt that it would be cowardly to flee from the country for purposes of self-preservation. Finally he is assassinated, and his wife feels that she is no longer bound by his scruples, especially since she realizes that it is hopeless for her to do anything at that late date to reverse the current. Only the future could accomplish that.

"Endure No Longer" is not particularly well constructed as a novel, but it deserves reading and it makes a singular appeal because of its total lack of bitterness or empty-witted polemic.

More Books of the Week

The Proud People. Kyle Crichton. Scribner. $2.75.

LEE was a Yeoman Second Class of the Women's Reserve. She had little glamor, and hence was acceptable to the girls; she had abundant good humor and was accordingly very popular with the men who consistently elected her to be chairlady of station socials. She appeared a strong, almost a dominant personality who could cope with any situation. Few knew she was Jewish, and no one cared. We were amazed when she turned into the sick bay with an indisposition that the doctors could not analyze. As I made the "rounds" one morning she confessed the nature of the malady: she could not stand aspersions against her "race." It was something of a shock, for anti-Semitism, as the civilian world knows it, is non-existent in the Navy. I pressed her for an example. Among several, one she cited was typical: she had been talking to another Wave who admitted she loved a Catholic man and added: "My father hates Catholics; he would much rather have me marry a Jew." A chance remark, with no intent to harm, but it left its sting in an apparently light-hearted girl.

Prejudice works that way: It is a strange poison that injures him who entertains it, for it shuts out any objective appraisal of a human situation: and it creates emotional reactions that defy analysis. The novel under review attempts to portray these effects in a segment of our population that we rarely consider to be victims of this social malaise.

The persistence of social prejudice in America is a depressing fact. Alone among the people of the earth we have made a fetish of democracy and its corollary, equality. As we die for these ideals in distant jungles, we

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refuse to apply them at home. Yet, it is encouraging that we never quite feel comfortable when we act against our principles, and it is always possible to appeal to them effectively and to have us reexamine and reaffirm them. It has been said that a hypocrite is a tribute to the Christian heritage, for at least he is conscious of the good. It can be said fairly that we feel a similar contradiction in our social relations.

The author confines himself to one small sector of this problem and traces the effect of social ostracism on a proud Spanish family. They have seen the land that their forefathers had possessed invaded by the "Anglos" and were nonchalant when their wealth slipped through their fingers; but they rebelled when the newcomers looked down upon them as inferiors. In seeking a solution, the author gives the answer that a coach might offer between halves to a losing team: "Fight back, don't give up!" It is inadequate, as are all responses to situations founded on emotion. But pathetically, it is the only solution that will work.

"The Proud People" is not a great novel. The dialogue is somewhat tedious and the author struggles with a host of characters in attempting to portray the varied responses of a large family. But he has created an unforgettable character in wise old Aunt Cerfina, and has presented another aspect of our social scene in a compelling manner. For both reasons it can be read with profit.

JOSEPH N. MOODY.

The Razor's Edge. W. Somerset Maugham. Doubleday. $2.75.

IN HIS latest novel Mr. Maugham gives no evidence that the degenerative process which set in after he had finished "Of Human Bondage" has ceased. "The Razor's Edge" in its total effect is unbelievably cheap and trifling. Its hero is an ex-aviator (in the last war) who, Mr. Maugham would have us believe, "found a faith." I read the book through with real attention, hoping to discover what this faith might be. Catholicism he tried and dismissed on grounds which irresistibly reminded me of freshman "bull sessions" at college. In substance, our hero cannot believe in a God who permits evil. He then wanders to India (I suppose this is inevitable) and there studies with a Hindu teacher and holy man. He does not, however, embrace Hinduism, though he does have something we are led to suppose is a mystical experience. The nearest I can figure it out, the faith Larry found might be catalogued as a natural mysticism, though I cannot see how the word *faith* fits in. The rest of the novel deals with the lives of Larry's old friends, his one-time fiancée, who still desires to possess him, her uncle, a childhood friend from Illinois, who sinks to the depths of drug addiction and vice and is finally murdered, presumably by one of her sailor lovers. For all of this I can find no better adjective than cheap. The one redeeming thing about the book is that Maugham's knack of sparkling characterization is still occasionally in evidence, particularly when he is dealing with Elliott Templeton, the expatriate American uncle of Larry's once betrothed.

Particularly moving is the episode of Elliott Templeton's death and reception of the Last Sacraments. Elliott had entered the Church, superficially for rather decorative reasons—in order that he might wear the trappings of the Church—but underneath all this, his Christianity was a solid thing.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

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The Inner Forum

On the Waging of War

PARALLELING THE COMMONWEAL'S recent campaign against obliteration bombing, there has been considerable discussion in periodicals in other countries. The *Tablet* of London (March 18) has an article entitled "The Decline of Standards in Warfare." It cites first the Rome correspondent of the liberal daily *Dagens Nyheter* of Stockholm, who is believed to be the first correspondent to visit Castel Gandolfo after it was bombed. Some 18,000 people had trustfully taken refuge in the Pope's park and castle and suffered great casualties when a building near the Papal villa itself collapsed; victims numbered 500. The Swedish correspondent declares "By their bombing in the Roman area, and especially by the bombing of Castel Gandolfo, the Allies have lost a great deal of the sympathy which they formerly enjoyed among the population."

The article cites *Osservatore Romano* several times. Commenting on an Allied raid (issue of March 2), it maintains that "modern technique affords effective means of detecting, even at night, selected targets which should in any case never be the dwelling houses of peaceful and unarmed citizens, nor buildings consecrated to religion, culture or art." It refers to "most grievous incidents, which are occurring repeatedly in many countries and which not only do not produce any result, however slight, such as might hasten the solution of the conflict but contribute at an increasing rate to provoke fearful bewilderment and dangerous reactions . . ." At an earlier date the *Osservatore Romano* contrasted the scorched earth policy of the Germans with the century-old efforts of the Church to abolish war altogether and, where that was not possible, to humanize it—witness the Truce of God and the agreement of belligerents "to respect not only women, children and the clergy, but also other classes of persons such as farmers, fishermen, merchants and those whose activities were regarded as essential to the common welfare . . ." The March issue of the *Catholic Gazette* of London opposes obliteration bombing "because it rubs out the last line of difference between the combatant and the noncombatant and because is is a means which no end can justify."

Pro Deo Documentation of New York (CIP) quotes the Bishop of Liège, Belgium, on another important aspect of the waging of the war. Here is a short excerpt from the pastoral of Bishop Louis Josephs Kerkhofs: "Hatred, if it is real hatred directed against persons, is just as unchristian as theft and murder. When condemning, as unworthy of a Christian, all acts of violence, calumnies and denunciations, which are based on jealousy and revenge and of which we are only too frequently the sad witnesses, we must condemn at the same time all secret hatred as well and all plans to commit murders of retaliation after the war."

CONTRIBUTORS

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This Publishing Business

FOUR JUST MEN

Probably no greater Scripture scholar has written in English than the late Abbot of Downside, the Benedictine Dom John Chapman. It was pleasant, five years after his death, to find among his papers a manuscript in which all that massive scholarship lets itself play lightheartedly upon the four men who head the best sellers of all the world. It was a little jewel of a manuscript; as prepared for press by one of his fellow Benedictines, it makes a little jewel of a book.

Really one should read it—now, especially when the liturgical movement is turning for its own completion into the scriptural movement. The four men who wrote the Gospels have always been names, but have largely ceased to be personalities. Even the names suffered some eclipse. I wonder if children still pray

"Matthew Mark Luke and John
Bless the bed that I lie on."

(Remember Chesterton's query whether the higher critic, having jettisoned St. John, sleeps on a three-cornered bed.) Anyhow it helps us to read the Gospels if we are aware of the four very different men who wrote them. There is a natural temptation for the mind to leap over the first three and settle upon John, who received the greatest compliment ever paid by Our Lord to a man. But if we do, we shall miss three very interesting personalities.

There was Matthew, the Inland Revenue official. He was actually sitting at his desk receiving revenue: Our Lord came up to the desk and said "Follow me": and he did. The raising of Lazarus from the dead is hardly so surprising.

Then there is Mark: Was he the young man who, when Our Lord was arrested in the garden, ran away so fast that he left his garment in the hands of a soldier and scurried to safety naked? At any rate he *did* desert Paul and Barnabas on one of their missionary journeys and so caused a "dissension" between those two (Scripture calls it a "paroxysm"). And he became secretary to St. Peter, who had done some deserting himself. Anyhow both of them got over the deserting habit, for both were martyred. Mark's Gospel is really St. Peter's: and once you know that, you can see it (Dom John Chapman aiding you) by the continual writing down of Peter in it.

We have run out of space for St. Luke the physician; but this is a misfortune we will understand, for he wrote the longest book of the New Testament and might have made it longer only that he had reached the limit of a roll of commerce and the publishers and booksellers would not have liked any more.

But anyhow you can read it all in Dom John Chapman's book: what we know of the four men, how we know they wrote these four books, what they owed to one another in the writing, how the wind has blown away the nineteenth century frenzy which denied that the Gospels were by Our Lord's contemporaries. It is the gayest of books: and the gaiety has that last fine edge which comes from perfect precision. ($1.25) —F. J. S.

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